

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MORES

107

of males in the Roman empire greatly exceeded the number of females.<sup>1</sup> The Roman system used up women.

110\* Sparta. The case of Sparta is especially interesting because the Spartan mores were generally admired and envied in the fourth century B.C. They were very artificial and arbitrary. They developed into a catastrophe. The population declined to such a point that it was like group suicide. The nation incased itself in fossilized mores and extremest conservatism, by which its own energies were crushed. The institutions produced consequences which were grotesque compared with what had been expected from them.<sup>2</sup>

111. Optimism of prosperity. "I apprehend that the key to the joyful character of the antique religions known to us [ in western Asia] lies in the fact that they took their shape in communities that were progressive and, on the whole, prosperous."

Weak groups were exterminated. Those which survived "had all the self-confidence and elasticity that are engendered by success in the struggle of life/" "The religious gladness of the Semites tended to assume an orgiastic character and become a sort of intoxication of the senses, in which anxiety and sorrow were drowned for the moment/"<sup>3</sup>

112. Antagonism between an individual and the mores. The case of dissent from the mores, which was considered above (sec. 100), is the case in which the individual voluntarily sets himself in antagonism to the mores of the society. There are cases in which the individual finds himself in involuntary antagonism to the mores of the society, or of some subgroup to which he belongs. If a man passes from one class to another, his acts

show the contrast between the mores in which he  
was bred and  
those in which he finds himself. The satirists  
have made fun of  
the *parvenu* for centuries. His mistakes and  
misfortunes reveal  
the nature of the mores, their power over the  
individual, their  
pertinacity against later influences, the confusion  
in character  
produced by changing them, and the grip of habit  
which appears

<sup>1</sup> Seeck, I, 337.

<sup>2</sup> Burckhardt, I, 139 ff.; Beloch, *Griech. Gesch.*, I, 283, 570 ;  
II, 362.

<sup>3</sup> W. Rob. Smith, *Relig\* of the Semites*, 260.